

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

ferences that arose between him and Reza Khan led eventually to his overthrow. On May 24, 1921, after barely three months* rule, Zia ed-Din had to escape from the country. He first reached Bagdad, and later settled in Haifa, Palestine. "Thus," writes Balfour, "terminated an honest and self-sacrificing attempt to save Persia from bankruptcy and to preserve her from foreign invasion."

Reza Khan remained sole master of the situation. He did not reach immediately for supreme power: he was satisfied with having control of the army in his new capacity of Minister of War. On the reorganization of the army Reza focused all his energies. After the World War Iran found her army in a sad state. The gendarmerie was Swedish-officered and during the war found itself under the preponderant German influence. In the south, to counteract German diversionary activities, the British had created the South Persia Rifles, a formation eventually recognized by the Iranian government, yet completely dependent on the British financially and organizationally.

The Cossack Brigade, and later Division, was Russian-officered and was, till the late fall of 1930, commanded by Colonel Starosselsky.

There were, to be sure, a few purely Iranian units; their effectives were, however, small and their organization corrupt and inefficient.

The Cossack Division was, at the time of the coup in February, 1921, the only well-organized Iranian formation within easy reach of Teheran. To command the Division was to have almost unlimited

opportunities in Iran. Reza Khan acted, however, slowly and cautiously. To establish himself as the supreme ruler of Iran, he would have to overcome much opposition as well as to

decide the fate of the monarchy, now personified by the last representative of the Qajar dynasty, weak and pleasure-seeking Ahmed Shah. Reza's slow work in consolidating his influence was successful. In the eyes of the Shah and Iranian cabinets, he was indispensable because of the necessity of curbing revolts of provincial tribes and of separatist border movements. The pacification of Azerbaijan was mainly Reza's work. All foreign advisers, including the British, having been eliminated from the heterogeneous military formations, Reza Khan managed to unify all these forces into a closely knit, centrally controlled army. By 1923 Reza became Prime Minister, and after a